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ABSTRACT

A "prerequisite" is a measure of readiness for a course or program that a student is required to meet as a condition of enrolling in a course or program. An "advisory" is a measure of readiness for a course or program that a student is recommended to meet in order to enroll. A prerequisite or advisory may be a course, activity, audition, test, or similar measure of readiness. This 8-part report presents regulations and guidelines for establishing prerequisites and advisories for the California community colleges. Definitions of terms are provided in section 1, while section 2 reviews California state legislation regulating institutional prerequisites, and describes different kinds of prerequisites including standard prerequisites (e.g., science and language courses required for a transfer degree); performance courses (e.g., auditions or try outs for theater or orchestra classes); sequential courses within and across disciplines; health and safety prerequisites; honors courses and other special purpose courses; blocks of courses; and program prerequisites. Section 3 reviews the guidelines for establishing advisories, while section 4 discusses an instructor's formal agreement to teach a prerequisite course. Next, section 5 outlines the requirements colleges may impose on probationary students, students at risk of dismissal, and students enrolling after being dismissed from another institution. Section 6 discusses the establishment of effective dates for prerequisites. Section 7 presents guidelines for providing prerequisite information in catalogs and schedules of classes. Finally, section 8 reviews guidelines for dropping students from prerequisite courses for reasons of health and safety. (PAA)

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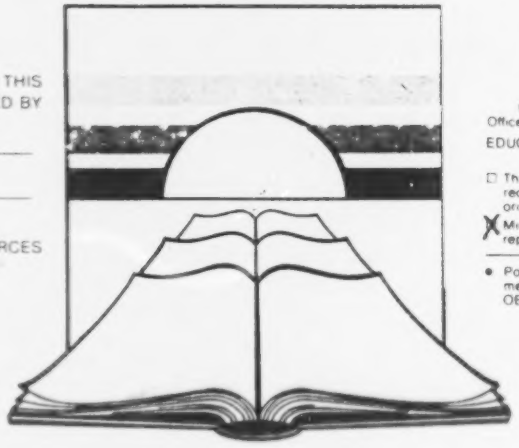

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Ad Hoc Committee on Prerequisites and Matriculation of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

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Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

Ad Hoc Committee for
Prerequisites and Matriculation

ESTABLISHING PREREQUISITES

PROPOSED REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

1. Definitions

(a) Prerequisite: A prerequisite is a measure of readiness for a course or program that a student is required to meet as a condition of enrolling in a course or program. A prerequisite may be a course, activity, audition, test, or similar measure of readiness. A prerequisite may be established only as provided in Section 2. For purposes of this section, the word "prerequisite" shall be understood to include corequisites as well as prerequisites, course prerequisites as well as skill prerequisites and program prerequisites as well as prerequisites for an individual course, except where the subsection explicitly specifies different provisions for one or more of these categories.

(b) Advisory: An advisory is a measure of readiness for a course or program that it is recommended a student meet in order to enroll. An advisory may be a course, activity, audition, test, or similar measure of readiness. An advisory may be established only as provided in Section 3.

(1) Co-advisory: A co-advisory is, like a corequisite, a course or activity which a student should complete during the same term as the course for which it is the co-advisory. The difference between a corequisite and a co-advisory is that the latter is recommended rather than required. Co-advisories may be established only as provided in Section 3.

(2) For purposes of this article, the word "advisory" shall be understood to include co-advisories as well as advisories, course advisories as well as skill advisories and program advisories as well as advisories for an individual course, except where the subsection explicitly specifies different provisions for one or more of these categories.

"Advisory" and "co-advisory" are words that are being given a special and new meaning in this context. Since some colleges enforce prerequisites and other colleges use them as "advisories," new vocabulary was necessary to avoid the ambiguity of the current usage of "prerequisite."

(c) Delayed: A student's progress towards a degree or certificate is delayed if it will take at least one term, quarter or semester, longer for the student to reach the degree or certificate specified in his or her Educational Plan.

(d) Across Disciplines: A prerequisite is established across disciplines if the prerequisite and the course for which it is proposed to be a prerequisite are in different disciplines.

2. Prerequisites

This section applies whenever the student's enrollment in a course or program is contingent on his or her having met some requirement of the college. These regulations are intended to authorize as course prerequisites only courses given at the college. Courses taken at high schools or at other colleges may be a basis for an acceptable challenge.[1]

A college may establish a prerequisite, including those needed pursuant to Section 55002(d)-(g) of this title, only if the college has complied with (a), (b), (c), (e), and one of the subsections of (d):

(a) The prerequisite is approved through the curriculum review process established pursuant to Section 55002(a)(1) and 53200-53204; and

(b) The curriculum review process established by the district requires, at a minimum that:

(1) The faculty in the discipline must approve the course and, as a separate action, approve the prerequisite. If the college has no faculty member in the discipline, the department must approve the course and, as a separate action, approve the prerequisite.The curriculum committee also must approve the course and, as a separate action, approve the prerequisite. The faculty in the discipline or in the department as provided in subsection 2(b)(1) and the curriculum committee must each:

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[1] It would not be appropriate to establish a prerequisite of "any high school course in chemistry" as the sole requirement since to do so would be accepting courses of such diverse content and standards that it would be impossible for the college to determine whether or not this prerequisite really was necessary for a student to be ready to take the next course.

A. Endorse that the prerequisite is an appropriate and rational measure of a student's readiness to enter the course or program; and

B. As a separate action, endorse that the prerequisite meets the requirements of subsection 2(d)(1), 2(d)(2), 2(d)(3), 2(d)(4), 2(d)(5), 2(d)(6), or 2(d)(7) and specify which one.

The committees must support the prerequisite and, in addition, the committees must agree that the prerequisite meets at least one of the categories of approved prerequisite and the standards specified there. Of course, colleges could set additional requirements or levels of review.

(c) The college must establish a process by which any student who does not meet the prerequisite may seek entry into the class as follows:

(1) The college may establish a challenge process as required by Section 55534, in which the college retains the right to grant or deny the student entry into the class; or

(2) The college may, in lieu of compliance with Section 55534, require a student who does not meet the prerequisite to meet with a counselor or faculty advisor within the challenged discipline before enrolling in the course. Such a requirement to meet with a counselor or faculty advisor within the challenged discipline under this section may only be imposed on those students who do not meet the prerequisite. If a college requires a student who lacks a prerequisite to meet with a counselor or faculty advisor within the challenged discipline in lieu of establishing a challenge process, the student must be permitted to take the class at his or her sole discretion after he or she has the required meeting.

The college may establish a challenge process as required by Section 55534 for some prerequisites and, in lieu of a challenge process, establish a required meeting with a counselor or advisor pursuant to subsection 2(c)(2) for other prerequisites.

(d) Prerequisites established pursuant to this section must meet the requirements of at least one of the following subsections:

(1) The Standard Prerequisites

This section would allow the standard and obvious prerequisites to be established with a minimum of review, enhancing the transfer function in particular and allowing for the resources of the college to be expended on the problematic cases. Examples that would fit well here are standard science class prerequisites or standard foreign language classes. Since this section is intended for very common cases, a college that is having difficulty finding three UC or CSU campuses that

have the same prerequisite and the same courses should instead seek to establish the prerequisite under another subsection, for example, 2(d)(3). However, the CAN system might provide a quick source of information on which campuses teach the most common courses. The Subject A English course is required by all UC campuses as a prerequisite for English composition classes.

A course may be established as a prerequisite for another course provided that the college specifies as part of the course outline of record required by Section 55002 at least three of the campuses of the University of California and the California State University, which show in their catalogs that they offer the equivalent course. Any combination of University of California campuses and California State University campuses is acceptable in satisfaction of this requirement; and

A. Each of the three campuses has a prerequisite for its course; and

B. The prerequisite that the community college has established is equivalent to the prerequisite established by the three campuses; and

UC and CSU do not normally offer courses that are equivalent to precollegiate basic skills courses, so this provision would only be usable for college-level courses.

C. Each committee that reviews the prerequisite pursuant to Subsection 2(b) includes in its review a determination that:

[1] Skills, concepts, and/or information taught in the first course is presupposed in the second course; and

[2] Three campuses of the University of California and the California State University offer the equivalent course; and

[3] Each of the three campuses has a prerequisite for its course; and

[4] The prerequisite proposed at the community college is equivalent to the prerequisite established by the three campuses; and

D. As a regular part of the program review process or at least every six years, the college must review each prerequisite, according to 2(d)(1)A and 2(d)(1)B above, to establish that the curriculum at the community college continues to be parallel with at least three of the campuses of

the University of California and the California State University as provided in subsection 2(d)(1) above.

(2) Performance Courses

Auditions or try outs may be required as a prerequisite for a course that includes public performance or intercollegiate competition provided that:

Courses that would fit here include but are not limited to band, orchestra, theater, competitive speech, chorus, journalism, dance, and athletic teams.

A. For any certificate or associate degree requirement which can be met by taking this course, there is another course or courses which satisfy the same requirement and which do not have the same prerequisite; and

B. The college includes in the course outline of record required by Section 55002 a list of each certificate or associate degree requirement that the course meets and of the other course or courses which have no prerequisite and meet the same requirement; and

C. Each committee that reviews the prerequisite pursuant to Subsection 2(b) includes in its review a determination of whether the course includes public performance or intercollegiate competition, and that there is another course or courses which meet any certificate or associate degree requirement met by the course for which the prerequisite is proposed and which do not have the same prerequisite; and

D. The college has a process whereby a student who believes his or her progress towards the associate degree or certificate he or she is seeking would be delayed[2] by the prerequisite may challenge that prerequisite and, if he or she would be delayed, may be admitted to the course in a timely fashion; and

E. An explanation of the student's rights under this section is published in the college catalog and schedule of classes; and

F. As a regular part of the program review process or at least every six years, the college must determine for each course whether such prerequisites have a disproportionate impact on any historically underrepresented groups.

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[2] "Delayed" is defined in Section 1.

(3) Sequential Courses Within and Across Disciplines
A course may be established as a prerequisite for another course provided that skills, concepts, and/or information taught in the first course are presupposed in the second course, and:

A. Each committee that reviews the prerequisite pursuant to Subsection 2(b) includes in its review a determination of whether skills, concepts, and/or information taught in the first course are presupposed in the second course; and

B. Both courses are degree-applicable whether the course is required for a degree, required for a certificate, or only an elective; and

C. A list of the specific skills and/or knowledge a student must possess in order to be ready to take the course is included in the course outline of record as required by Section 55002. The accuracy of that list is attested to by the faculty in the discipline, and the appropriateness of the prerequisite as a measure of a student's possession of those skills and that knowledge is supported by the faculty in the discipline. The accuracy of the list of skills and knowledge and the appropriateness of the prerequisite must be endorsed by a committee representing the division or other organizational unit that includes departments that teach similar disciplines; and

D. As a regular part of the program review process or at least every six years, the college must review the continued appropriateness of the use of each prerequisite, following the process described in 2(d)(3)C above.

Vocational courses often have obvious prerequisites, but the courses are not offered at enough UC or CSU campuses to meet the requirements of subsection 2(d)(1). Although most such prerequisites would be within the discipline, others would not. For example, the health professions commonly have prerequisites outside the discipline such as anatomy and physiology for nursing. This same level of scrutiny could be used for establishing a corequisite such as a laboratory for a lecture.

(4) Health and Safety
A prerequisite may be established provided that:

A. The course for which the prerequisite is proposed is one in which the student might endanger his or her own health and safety or the health and safety of others; and

B. The prerequisite is that the student possess what is necessary to protect his or her health and safety and the health and safety of others before entering the course; and

C. Each committee that reviews the prerequisite pursuant to Subsection 2(b) specifies its agreement that Subsections A and B are true descriptions of the course and its prerequisite.[3]

Students whose actions jeopardize the health and safety of others may be involuntarily dropped from a course pursuant to Section 8.

(5) Honors Courses and Other Special Purpose Courses
A prerequisite for an honors course or other special purpose course that has not been established as provided under other provisions of this section may be established under this subsection if there is another course or courses at the college which satisfy the same requirement and which do not have the same prerequisite; and

A. Each committee that reviews the prerequisite pursuant to Subsection 2(b) includes in its review a determination of whether the prerequisite is an appropriate measure of a student's readiness to take the course, and

B. The college includes in the course outline of record required by Section 55002 a list of each certificate or associate degree requirement that the course meets and of the other course or courses which have no prerequisite and meet the same associate degree or certificate requirement; and

C. The college has a process whereby a student may be admitted to the course in a timely fashion if the student challenges the prerequisite on the basis that the prerequisite would delay his or her progress towards the associate degree or certificate specified in the student's educational plan or towards transfer. The student's challenge shall be upheld if the prerequisite would delay that student, and there is no other course which meets the same associate degree, certificate, or transfer requirement available during that term; and

D. An explanation of the student's rights under this section is published in the college catalog and schedule of classes.

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[3] There was discussion at the July meeting of the task force that this issue is dealt with in the Education Code. Upon review of the relevant sections of the Education Code, it should become clear whether all that is needed in Title 5 is a guideline to explain the statute or some treatment of the issue in Title 5 in addition.

E. As a regular part of the program review process or at least every six years, the college must review the curriculum to determine that the college is continuing to offer another course or courses which do not have the same prerequisite and meet the same associate degree or certificate requirement as the course with the prerequisite.

This subsection provides for establishing honors sections of courses. If the honors section is a separate course and an articulation agreement exists that treats the course differently upon transfer or if there are other extrinsic, concrete benefits to taking the honors course, then the prerequisite should be established only as provided in the other subsections of 2(d).

(6) Blocks of Courses

The Puente Program is perhaps the most well-known example of such a program.

Blocks of courses are, for purposes of this subsection, two or more courses that are corequisites of one another in order to create a cohort of students. Such corequisites may be established provided there is another course or courses which satisfy the same requirement and which do not have the same prerequisite; and

A. Each committee that reviews the prerequisite pursuant to Subsection 2(b) includes in its review a determination of whether the corequisites are to be established in order to create a cohort of students;

B. The college includes in the course outline of record required by Section 55002 a list of each certificate or associate degree requirement that the course meets and of the other course or courses which have no prerequisite and meet the same associate degree or certificate requirement; and

C. The college has a process whereby a student may be admitted to the course in a timely fashion if the student challenges the prerequisite on the basis that the prerequisite would delay his or her progress towards the associate degree or certificate specified in the student's educational plan or towards transfer. The student's challenge shall be upheld if the prerequisite would delay that student, and there is no other course which meets the same associate degree, certificate, or transfer requirement available during that term; and

D. An explanation of the student's rights under this section is published in the college catalog and schedule of classes.

E. As a regular part of the program review process or at least every six years, the college must review the curriculum to determine that the college is continuing to offer another course or courses which do not have the same prerequisite and meet the same associate degree or certificate requirement as the course with the prerequisite.

(7) Other

For any prerequisites not covered in other sections of (d) above, a systematic model of content review, approved by the Chancellor's Office, shall be an acceptable means of reviewing and evaluating prerequisites. Other types of research designs approved by the Chancellor's Office shall be acceptable also, and may be used at the discretion of the college or district.

(8) Programs[4]

Programs may have prerequisites provided that:

A. The prerequisite may be established as provided in another subsection of 2(d) for the first course in the program; or

B. The prerequisite meets the requirements of another subsection of 2(d) for a course in the program subsequent to the first course in the program, provided that:

[1] The program is an expensive, impacted program; and

[2] Each committee that reviews the prerequisite pursuant to Subsection 2(b) includes in its review a determination of whether the program is an expensive, impacted program.

C. As a regular part of the program review process or at least every six years, the college must determine for each prerequisite whether it has a disproportionate impact on any historically underrepresented groups.

If a college wishes to establish requirements to complete a course or courses before admission to a program in order to establish priorities for admission to the program, such a requirement may only be established as provided in Section 58106(a) of this title on enrollment priorities. For example, nursing programs

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[4] Since "program" has a very specific meaning in current processes for "program approval," a different word would be preferable. However, since the emphasis here is on a special type of prerequisites, program prerequisites, that term may be accurate here.

sometimes require completion of all requirements for the associate's degree prior to admission to the nursing program itself.[5] *These sections are for the purpose of establishing prerequisites that have to do with a student's readiness to take the class. Restricting enrollment to a block of courses in order to create a cohort of students for the purpose of increasing student success is permitted provided that the requirements of Section 2(d)(5) are met.*

(e) A college which establishes a course prerequisite under this section must have in place a process whereby a student may challenge a prerequisite by demonstrating that he or she possesses the required readiness although he or she has not taken the specific course. The grounds for challenging the prerequisite shall include but are not restricted to having acquired substantially similar knowledge or skills through completion of a similar course at another institution, appropriate work experience, or individual learning.

3. Advisories

A college may establish an advisory only if the college has complied with (a) and (b) following. The college may require that a student meet a standard of readiness at entry only as provided in Section 2. A college may recommend a student meet a measure of readiness at entry only as provided in this section, regardless of whether the college terms such recommendations in its catalog or schedule as "prerequisites," as "recommended," or by any other term.

(a) The advisory is approved through the curriculum review process established pursuant to Section 55002(a)(1) and 53200-53204; and

(b) The curriculum review process established by the district requires, at a minimum, that:

(1) The department and the curriculum committee must each approve the course and, as a separate action, approve the advisory; and

(2) The department and the curriculum committee must each endorse that the advisory is an appropriate and rational measure of a student's readiness to enter the course or program.

(c) An explanation of the student's rights under this section is published prominently in the college catalog and schedule of classes.

Establishing advisories requires a limited version of content validation and prominent notice in both the schedule and the catalog of the student's right to take the course even lacking the "advisory." It is the intent of this language that it apply to anything that the college is advising a student to meet before taking a particular course regardless of what term the college uses in its publications to convey that

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[5] Amendments to Section 58106(a) will be considered separately.

advice, i.e.,whether the college calls its advisories " prerequisites" or whether the college calls them "recommendations" or any other name it might use.

4. Instructor's Formal Agreement to Teach the Course as Described
Each college shall establish a formal process to ensure that faculty both cover the topics listed in the course outlines and evaluate students using the criteria specified in that outline. The process shall be established by consulting collegially with the local academic senate and, if appropriate, the local bargaining unit.

Any prerequisite is suspect unless instructors in fact teach the course as described in the documents that served as a basis for establishing the prerequisite. There is no intention here to limit the creativity or academic freedom of individual faculty. Where there are multiple ways to deliver the same instruction and achieve the same goals, there should simply be multiple courses. However, a prerequisite becomes arbitrary and unreasonable if only some of the instructors of a particular course really do require the knowledge or skills the prerequisite is intended to measure.

5. Probation and Dismissal
A college may require a student to meet reasonable rules to enhance the likelihood of success for students on probation or subject to dismissal including students who are enrolling after having been dismissed from the college or another college under academic or progress probation and dismissal policies. These rules may include limiting the total number of units the student is permitted to take or requiring students to follow a prescribed educational plan. Such rules may be established provided that:

(a) The college has a process in place whereby a student may challenge the prerequisite or other restriction on the grounds that the rule is not reasonable or that for some reason the rule should not apply to him or her. This process must include the right to have both an original review of the student's claims and an appeal, if the student wishes, to a different person or persons who have the authority to remove the restriction.

(b) The rules are established pursuant to sections 53200-53204 of this title.

6. Effective Date
The effective date for these regulations shall be as prescribed by law. Every new prerequisite or advisory and every prerequisite or advisory that is in effect on the day these regulations go into effect but are not in compliance with the prior regulations shall be established only in a manner consistent with this title as amended. A prerequisite or advisory established prior to the effective date of these regulations may continue in effect if it is determined to be in compliance with this title as amended or if the prerequisite or advisory was established based on content or numerical validation as provided in the regulations in effect on May 5, 1992. Prerequisites that were in compliance with the regulations in effect on May 5, 1992 but for which no content or numerical validation was required or

performed may continue in effect for the two academic years following adoption of these regulations in order to provide time for an orderly review.

7. Information in the Catalog and Schedule of Classes

A college that establishes any prerequisites or advisories must, as a condition of enforcing those prerequisites and advisories, provide the following explanations both in the college catalog and in the schedule of classes:

(a) If the college has established any prerequisites, what prerequisites are, why the college establishes them, a general description of how prerequisites are reviewed before being established, as well as procedures for a student to challenge a prerequisite and circumstances under which a student is encouraged to make such a challenge. The information about challenging a prerequisite must include, at a minimum, the specific process, the various types of challenge that are established in law and any additional types of challenge permitted by the college.

(b) If the college has established any advisories, what advisories are, why the college establishes them, a general description of how an advisory is reviewed before being established, the right of a student to choose to take a course without meeting the advisory, the process for exercising that right, and circumstances under which a student is encouraged to exercise that right.

8. Dropping a Student for Reasons of Health and Safety

The determination of whether a student meets a prerequisite shall be made prior to his or her enrollment in the course requiring that prerequisite; provided, however, that enrollment may be permitted pending verification that the student obtained a satisfactory grade in a prerequisite course. If the verification shows that the student has failed to meet the prerequisite, the student may be involuntarily dropped from the course if the applicable enrollment fees are promptly refunded. Otherwise, a student may only be involuntarily removed from a course due to excessive absences, or as a result of disciplinary action taken pursuant to law or the student code of conduct, or as a result of a determination by the instructor of the course that the student through his or her actions is endangering his or her health or safety or the health and safety of others. In case of a student's being involuntarily removed from class due to his or her being a threat to health and safety, the college shall provide the student with a means to appeal the instructor's decision and shall provide the student with information about how to exercise this right with the notice that he or she has been removed from the class.[6]

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[6] This section shows the existing language of the current regulation in normal type and the proposed addition to the existing language is underlined.